
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the New York State Board of Elections:

6 Empire State Plaza, Suite 201
Albany, NY 12223
(518) 474-6220 (voice)
(800) 533-8683 (TDD)
www.elections.state.ny.us

If the New York State Board of Elections is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in New York?

If you are a resident of New York and you were convicted of a felony, you cannot vote while you are incarcerated. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in New York, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

If you were convicted of a felony and sentenced to incarceration, you automatically regain your right to vote upon expiration of the maximum time to which you were sentenced, or upon your discharge from parole, whichever occurs first.

If you were convicted of a felony but you were not sentenced to incarceration, or if the sentence was suspended, your conviction does not affect your right to vote.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

New York applies the same rules whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

The same rules apply for New York voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are New York's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in a New York election, you must be a U.S. citizen, be 18 years old by the date of the election, and live at your present address for at least 30 days before the election.

When do I need to register to vote?

You can register at any time, but in order to be eligible to vote in an election, you must be registered by the fourth Friday before the election.

Where do I go to register?

You can register to vote at your local board of elections or at the Department of Motor Vehicles. In addition, you may apply to register to vote at any of the following New York State agency offices:

- Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
- Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled
- Department of Health - WIC Program
- Department of Labor
- Department of Social Services
- Department of State
- Division of Veterans' Affairs
- Military Recruiting Offices
- Office for the Aging
- Office of the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- Office of Mental Health
- Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
- Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
- Workers' Compensation Board